up a National Information Technology Institute for development of information technology in the State *vide* letter dated 2nd December, 2000;

(b) if so, the action Government have taken thereon; and

(c) if no action has been taken so far the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN): (a) Yes, Sir. A letter has been received by the Ministry of Human Resource Development from the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Bihar to open a National Information Technology Institute in the State of Bihar,

(b) and (c) A Task Force on Human Resource Development (HRD) in Information Technology was set up in July, 2000, which has submitted its interim report in January 2001. The proposal from Bihar will be examined after taking a final decision regarding the plan for central assistance for such institutions in pursuance of the Task Force report. The Hon'ble Minister of Human Resource Development *vide* his letters dated 26.12.2000 and 20.2.2001 has replied to the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Bihar in this regard.

Sugar export to Pakistan

†*272. SHRIMATI SAVITA SHARDA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are contemplating to export sugar to Pakistan;

(b) if so, whether Government have so far taken any action in this regard; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

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†Original notice of the Question was received in Hindi.

THE MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHANTA KUMAR): (a) to (c) Pakistan has prescribed a list of items which can be imported from India. The said list does not include sugar.

However, the Government of Pakistan had allowed, in the financial year 2000-01, import of sugar from India. It decided on 7.3.2001 to ban the import. It however, allowed import of sugar against Letters of Credit opened till 7.3.2001. Pakistan has been lifting/re-imposing ban on import of sugar from India to suit its interests.

During his talks with the President of Pakistan in Agra on 15.7.2001, it was proposed by the Prime Minister of India that a group of experts of both countries be constituted to recommend measures to increase bilateral trade and economic and technical interaction between the two countries.

Suspected nexus between Pakistan and North Korea

*273. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the United States of America has publicly expressed apprehension about the long suspected nexus between Pakistan nuclear establishments and North Korean Ballistic Missile Programme;

(b) whether the suspicion is that Pakistan may be funneling weapons technology to North Korea in return of North Korea's ballistic missile technology; and

(c) if so, what are Government's views in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) and (b) Government has seen media reports quoting senior US officials expressing concern about Pakistan's nuclear programme that it was not under adequate export control, and that it could be spreading nuclear capabilities to other countries, including North Korea. The acquisition by Pakistan of ballistic missiles and